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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE, 1918.¹

I.

THE days last summer were the saddest we had seen since 1914. The bombardment of Paris by long-range cannon began near the end of March and continued from that time on sometimes by day and sometimes by night; air-raids multiplied; women and children, among the working classes as well as among the rich, sought refuge *en masse* in the central or western part of France. In June the advance of the Germans became so threatening that hardly any remained in Paris except those detained by their positions or necessary work. Fortunately the moral support and material aid of the American army began to make itself felt. The invaders were arrested, then turned back. Victory was with the Allies. But the harm had been done. "It is chaos," writes a traveller who, shortly after the armistice, crossed the place which had been formerly occupied by a large and bustling village. "It might well be the 'dry land' of Genesis at the moment when it issued out of nothing,—not a human being nor a living creature anywhere. The only things left are the primitive elements, earth, water, the wind heavy with mist and rain whistling across the desolate plains. As far as eye can see, on the slopes of the ridge and in the flat immensity, there are only shell-holes filled with yellow water,—terrible wells, foul at the bottom, and so numerous as to touch each other and unite oftentimes in shapeless seas . . . Of the

¹ Translated from the French by Dr. Katherine E. Gilbert.

trees that used to flourish here only a few still raise to heaven their barkless trunks and twigless branches."

In such a state of affairs, French philosophy also has passed a narrow and painful existence. The very look of most of our books is distressing. Printed on poor, grayish paper, brittle and thin, which would have scarcely served in former times for the daily papers, with the composition badly inked, and often defective on account of the inexperience of the workmen and the insufficient number of proof-readers,

Invalidique patrum referunt jejunia nati.

However, among the books of the year one stands out both because of its importance and because of the exceptional care given to the printing: the *Traité de Logique*¹ of M. Goblot. But the author informs us in the preface—and we could have guessed it—that it really dates from before the war. For four years M. Goblot, professor at the University of Lyons and deputy-mayor of that city, had had duties far too pressing for him to concern himself with a book. Lyons is indeed far from the scene of battle, but the general distress strained to the uttermost the administrative strength of all France. In particular, Lyons was a great center for hospital-work, manufacturing, and the furnishing of food. The town-council did not enjoy many leisure moments!

The most conspicuous characteristic of M. Goblot's book is that it is the work of an isolated individual, not of a school or even of a group whose members act as a kind of scientific check on each other. This accounts for its virtues and its defects. It is personal, and full of life and action; even when the author uses ideas which were not original with him, it is plain that he has rethought them, made them his own, and blended them with his own so thoroughly that he has forgotten their origin. The same thing happened to Descartes. The disadvantage is that the book is extremely uneven: first, because M. Goblot considers on the whole only those questions which interest him, and condenses into a few pages or even suppresses entirely what does not interest him. His book is less a *Treatise* than a series of 'essays'

¹ 1 vol., 8vo, Armand Colin, publisher.

on important points in logic. In the second place, what he does discuss he often treats summarily, with some little disdain for exactness and rigor in detail. One is sometimes reminded of those sketches by great painters in which important parts are scarcely drawn in, or in which features, considered singly, are frequently false, but which are, nevertheless, in their general 'movement' full of propriety and interest. In illustration one may cite his suggestive, although incomplete, analysis of the different kinds of quantity in propositions, the extension given to hypothetical propositions, the theory of deduction in so far as it may be distinguished from the theory of the syllogism.¹ For the past twenty years M. Goblot has set himself this problem: Granted that demonstration, as used by mathematicians, cannot be reduced to the syllogism, what *is* the operation which constitutes its essence? After dealing at close quarters and in great detail with Poincaré's celebrated theory which puts the nerve of the operation in "reasoning by recurrence," he himself proposes the following solution: Mathematical reasoning and all reasoning processes of the same type are essentially *constructive*, that is, they proceed by putting together distinct intellectual elements, the combining process being analogous to, although not identical with, that used in a physical manipulation. They derive their fruitfulness from this element of active construction and their quality of rigor from following definite rules. We *verify* the results by a mental act,—quite as the mechanic verifies the result of a certain mechanical adjustment,—with this difference, that in reasoning we take note of a logical result instead of an empirical event. The syllogism enters in only in order to apply to each separate operation general rules based upon admitted principles and propositions previously demonstrated.

Because of the part assigned to action, M. Goblot's theory might seem at times to approach Pragmatism. But this is a false impression; his intellectualism remains untouched, thanks to the distinction, noted above, between free choice of *operations* and the rigorous necessity which, within each of them, connects

¹ I beg to be allowed to refer for a more detailed discussion of this point to the article which appeared in the *Revue Philosophique* for January under the title: "*La Logique de M. Goblot.*"

principles with applications. His last chapter is a study of the scientific and rational spirit, written precisely in the temper of classical philosophy. In spite of a few concessions (chiefly of form) to the theories which include in science an element of 'arbitrariness' or 'convenience,' he vigorously criticizes contemporary irrationalism and anti-intellectualism. "If our knowledge," he says, "must be supplemented by our beliefs, the logician must see to it that the distinction is maintained in nature and value between the belief logically possible—even practically necessary—and science, which has logical necessity; and that the rights of science should not be sacrificed to the pretensions of belief so that the character of an assertion is attributed to a statement that lacks proof and is really an hypothesis . . . (p. 383). Since science is too limited for the purposes of action, it has to be eked out with something; but let us not paint this supplementary piece with the colors of science, and persuade ourselves that it is really a part of truth—truth differently acquired and supported, but none the less truth. . . . The belief which calms, reassures, or consoles, the belief which preserves, frees, or fortifies, may be described as *good*, but that does not make it *true*. . . . Let us have no fraud about it. Reason must disavow what it has not engendered" (p. 391).

II.

The enemy with whom M. Goblot here engages is not an imaginary one. Some works appeared this year which represent very well the opposite manner of thinking.

One is a little volume by M. Gonzague Truc, entitled *La Grâce, essai de psychologie religieuse*.¹ One could have wished for more extended and trustworthy references to theological literature and a more intimate acquaintance with contemporary psychology. It is, however, of especial interest for its implied or even explicit judgments of value. Whether God does or does not act upon men (and for his part, M. Truc frankly confesses his own scepticism) it still remains true that religious souls have felt, proved, lived, the experience of grace, and the opposite

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, published by Alcan.

experiences, lukewarmness, *acedia*, barrenness; here is, then, a reality to be analyzed. And what does one find upon analysis? A double state, kinæsthetic and psychological, the power of which, if we may believe the author, thoroughly establishes the primacy of feeling over intelligence. "We wish because we choose, and we choose because we love. The mere pretension of directing one's wishes independently of emotion, and of being governed by rational principles alone, simply reveals the greater sentimentalism, or to speak exactly, the greater pride. As for these principles, we cultivate them with a deliberate and jealous care, we feel injured if they are injured, and if, out of respect for them, we pretend to scorn the promptings of the heart, it is only to luxuriate the more in our own self-esteem. And it turns out that the pretended freedom from sentiment has all the qualities of the narrowest and most intolerant of sentiments" (pp. 61, 62).

"From whatever point of view one regards the life of inner experience, one discovers the necessity for this feeling of acquiescence that Christians call grace. . . . It produces harmony and peace within us. It is the addition which consecrates—one might even say—indemnifies effort. . . . In ethics it is the affective state which delights in the good; in its whole compass it is the inner predisposition toward the many and varied goods of life. . . . Finally it becomes a deep and harmonious attitude, the natural spring of all our acts, and the true health of the soul. It is then that we pass from the transient enjoyment of the emotion to its most enduring fruits, that our acts cease to be external and almost foreign to us, that we become identical with our intellectual 'form,' in short, that we become 'ourselves' in the sense of Nietzsche and Ibsen" (pp. 64, 65).

Whether the philosophies of Nietzsche and Ibsen have this moral value is a point that might be discussed. But it is surprising to find the author adding in the same passage: "It is one of the characteristics of our time to search out emotion wherever it may be found, to substitute for it the cold and abstract games of pure thought" (p. 62). Professions of an intellectual and rationalistic faith (such as M. Goblot's) are rare in the collection

of contemporary philosophical publications. Perhaps M. Truc had in mind while writing those lines the critics of romanticism,—such as M. René Berthelot, Ernest Seillière, René Lote, and also (the context would suggest) the sociologists who have sought a rational justification of morality in a positive theory of society. But beside these advocates of science and intelligence¹ what a flood of philosophical or semi-philosophical publications turned in the opposite direction! Is not the passionate and confused worship of life, such as was celebrated by Guyau in his beautiful prose-poem, *La Morale sans obligation ni sanction*, still the creed of many minds? *To live one's life, to be oneself*, have become the commonplaces of the great mass of half-cultivated minds. And on the other side, rationalism and science have not been less vigorously attacked in the name of religious faith. Fonsegrive, in his *Evolution des idées dans la France contemporaine*², with its sub-title of *De Taine à Péguy*, portrays the whole evolution of French thought from 1880 to 1914 as the renunciation of the 'scientisme' of Renan, Taine, Berthelot, and a return to the Christian faith. No, surely it is not by an excess of intellectualism that most of our present-day writers err.

M. Segond has just published a book on *La guerre mondiale et la vie spirituelle*.³ One of the clearest chapters is entitled: "*La position rationaliste du problème*." The aim of the chapter is to explain that reason can make no substantial contribution to this important subject,—neither the egoistic and partial reason of the practical man, nor the disinterested reason of the philosopher who looks at all things from the point of view of eternity. "For the impersonality of intellectualism," he says, "must be substituted the mystic universality of sentiment." M. Segond is a philosopher by profession; he teaches philosophy in one of the Lycees in Paris. But quite in contrast with the

¹ There are still further reservations to make. In M. René Lote's last book which is just out (*Les Intellectuels dans la Société française*, 12mo, published by Alcan) there is indeed a keen criticism of sentiment and imagination and a fine eulogy of reason, provided that by 'reason' be understood the *raison classique*, thoroughly impregnated with traditionalism; but there is also a great deal of defiance toward logic and "intellectualistic utopias."

² 1 vol., 12mo, published by Bloud and Gay.

³ 1 vol., 12mo, *Bibl. de phil. contemporaine*, published by Alcan.

professional mathematicians who have become philosophers, as Poincaré, Milhaud, LeRoy, he is by nature a mystic and artist. An artist—that is, his language is very individual, and glories in confounding ordinary logical distinctions. The mixture of highly abstract and emotional terms; the taste for rare usages and paradoxical groupings of words; the abundance of unexpected or puzzling epithets; the constant use of the preposition ‘à’ to suggest relations without defining them; the flowing music and harmony of his phrases; all combine to give the reader an impression of a very modern melody with subtle dissonances, which might at the same time be a half-transparent dialectic. And it must be confessed that this anti-intellectualism of form is not without charm. But M. Segond is also—and perhaps peculiarly—a mystic, and formerly wrote a curious book on *La Prière*. He feels the war with a prophet’s soul; underneath the physical appearance he seeks to commune with “the eternal and creative movement of spiritual life” (p. 113) which seems to him to be at work in hidden ways in the earthly conflict. Of M. Bergson’s doctrines he has retained especially the idea of “*l’élan vital*” which expresses itself at once in instinct and thought. But while the famous author of *L’Évolution Créatrice* carefully distinguishes the two forms of primordial will, and emphasizes their divergence at least as much as their common origin, M. Segond insists particularly upon their continuity. He explains the catastrophes in the midst of which we are living by a kind of immanent force, not a providence, yet something spiritual, and before all things, to his mind, a unity. For him, a soldier’s heroism is only a small impulse in the total ‘thrust’ that moves the nation; the effort of the United States or of France is only one aspect of the general movement which draws humanity on, and this movement in its turn is only an exalted form of the total life “universal and indivisible,” whose essential character is always to be creating afresh at any price (pp. 9, 11). “If all the potential exuberance of the spirit of the world should become manifest in the visible acts of the insane tragedy, the disorder thus exhibited would be in reality the organic and abounding power of the total action, and like the energizing cause of our essential development” (p. 121).

With such premises one would suppose that M. Segond would regard Pangermanism with indulgence; for is it not also a product of this universal ferment that tends toward power and renewal? But this would be a mistaken inference. Since he thinks of the vital exuberance as at once single in essence, and free, indeterminate, and full of the unforeseen in its manifestations, he is at the same time a monist and a pluralist—or at least he demands for himself the philosophical advantages of both. He repels, as opposed to action, the attempt to stand “*au-dessus de la mêlée*.” It is in deepening his own feeling of hatred for the barbarians, in delivering himself over to it entirely, that he thinks he sees the universal significance of war. Moreover, it is from this very hatred that he expects to see issue some day “*l’amitié universelle*” triply incarnated in an international Catholic Church, a judicial Society of Nations, and a general Confederation of Labor. Thus must come to its fruition “the spiritual energy of our victorious war.” *Spiritual energy* is the first and last phrase in the book. By ‘spirituality’ does the author mean anything more than life? It is the higher life, he says in conclusion. But if life, as he is constantly saying, is nothing more than perpetual renewal, infinite ambition, inexhaustible “disquietude,” in what consists the measure of *superiority*? “We must incarnate the spirit which carries us on toward the inspired formulas of our heart ” (p. 166).

The same defiance of ideas, the same confidence in feeling, appears in *Les Leçons morales de la Guerre*¹ by M. Paul Gaultier. “The intellectualism which has too long reigned in philosophy,” he writes at the end of his book, “and which erred in attributing influence to pure ideas alone, has been battered in by the facts. In view of the successive explosions of feeling which have brought all peoples one after the other into the war, even the most convinced rationalists have been forced to confess that reason does not guide the world.” In a series of brilliant chapters he tries to bring out the rôle of purely affective states in each of the belligerent nations: the insane pride, the mystical religion of imperialism in German aggression (for from the point

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, published by Flammarion.

of view of her own interests, Germany would have done better to have simply continued the economic conquest of the world, without trying to hurry it by a struggle of this kind); with the Belgians, the feeling of independence, the rebellion against the Germans' claim to recognize no law but force; in France the feeling of the country's danger, mingled with the old love of war and of an intense life; with the English, love of honor, respect for treaties, scorn for treachery; with the Servians, heroic obstinacy; with the Italians, the 'irredentist' sentiment; the ardent desire to increase the moral and material greatness of their country; finally, dominating everything else, American idealism, —the 'crusade' of the United States for right and justice.

All this is true. But must we conclude with M. Gaultier that ideas are nothing and feeling is everything? What would American idealism be without ideas? To what would the feeling of 'right' be attached in Belgium, England, France, if it had not for its 'matter' (as the philosophers say) the *idea* of right in general, and the *idea* of the particular rights which were violated by invasion? He denounces as a chief cause of the war the pan-german mysticism, the absurd and sentimental belief in a divine mission of hegemony. He may be right; but when he adds that mysticism was also the cause of the resistance to German aggression, is he not forgetting that for defense against actual invasion, or against a menace almost as imminent as invasion, a clear notion of danger and a reasonable courage are sufficient? Is it 'mysticism,' as M. Gaultier asserts, to engage in a "war for the defense of civilization"? Of course no one would deny "that ideas have no force without the coöperation of sentiments"; but the example of Germany proves that the inverse is no less true: that sentiment without ideas, or in the service of false ideas, can produce nothing but disorder and catastrophes.

III.

I have spoken first of works which draw from the war arguments against the intellect. But the events of the present time nourish philosophical reflections of a quite different type, and also reflections that are purely psychological.

Dr. Georges Dumas, professor of experimental psychology at the Sorbonne, and during the last few years physician to a hospital for nervous and mental diseases in the army, has summed up his observations in a volume entitled *Troubles mentaux et troubles nerveux de guerre*.¹ For some time works on this subject have been appearing, several of them voluminous collections of clinical observations. Professor Dumas's book, on the contrary, is brief, and aims to state clearly certain general ideas intelligible to laymen. After recalling and disposing of the classical mental ailments that existed before the war, and to which the war simply gave a content which might have been found elsewhere, he emphasizes the importance of *mental confusion* as constituting the most general form of war neuroses. He shows how various nervous affections, such as loss of speech or hearing, roaring in the ears, spasms, trouble with the gait or posture, paralysis or anesthesiâ, become grafted on to this confusion.

How are these troubles to be interpreted? Some arise directly from organic causes; but the others? They have been explained by the permanent or chronic character of an emotion. Dr. Dumas is not satisfied with this explanation; an emotion is, by its very nature, a passing thing which would not give rise to definite and lasting symptoms. More can be said in favor of auto-suggestion; treatment by contrary suggestions often succeeds, especially if it is combined with unpleasant therapeutic measures, such as the use of electricity, that force the subject more or less consciously to desire a cure. The efficacy of these suggestions, direct and indirect, demonstrates the mental character of the phenomena in question. But whence comes this extreme suggestibility bequeathed to the soldiers by fatigue, emotion, or the nervous shock of bombardment or bursting shells? From two things: on the one hand, from a general nutritional disturbance transformed by intoxication, and manifesting itself on the psychical side as mental confusion. When this mental confusion is slight, it is a favorable soil for auto-suggestion; if very strong, it produces only depression, stupor, numbness. But in its light form it causes a motor disturbance that suggests

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, published by Alcan.

the impossibility of motion. A pain or reaction, local or even trivial, is then sufficient to bring into play the second factor—the subject's belief that he can no longer speak, or straighten up his head or shoulders. The psychological mechanism is a familiar one; it was what provoked Solomon's remark, "There is a lion in the way!" Moreover, these exaggerated inhibitions are not explained simply as weakness or vice; they are the spontaneous self-defense of the organism, an unconscious and perhaps awkward means of economizing the vital forces which would run risk of exhaustion in a premature or ill-timed effort.

A final chapter, which is particularly interesting because it touches both psychology and ethics, has to do with imposters. What a problem they raise! In dealing with them Professor Dumas sometimes employed the 'strong manner,' threatening them with court-martial, subjecting them to painful treatments; sometimes the 'gentle manner,' that is, by an appeal to their better feeling he sought to win from them the confession of their deception,—a more efficacious method, but inconvenient in that it disarms the doctor: for once made confessor, he says, he can no longer punish the men nor hand them over to justice. To these methods, both of which aim at conviction, he prefers a third which is also recommended by his eminent colleague Babinski: not to try to determine the degree of sincerity of the man who calls himself sick—there is a complete scale from absolute sham to simple exaggeration—but to make the alleged symptoms disappear as rapidly as possible without inquiring into their reality. Doubtless the doctor who pretends to believe the patient, seems naïve, he acutely remarks in conclusion, but what difference does it make if the desired result is achieved? "On the other hand, if the patient is allowed to see that he is suspected of sham, from that day it is a battle to the finish,—a battle, moreover, in which his reputation is at stake, and the issue, therefore, much more doubtful and always more distant. Sometimes after the cure is accomplished, I have thrown off pretense and spoken with energy and precision; but usually I let the impostor continue to think that he has deceived me, and that he has not fallen in my opinion. It is a great help in keeping honest to fancy that one has never lost one's credit."

M. de Lanessan treats a moral question of a more far-reaching character in a pamphlet attractively entitled: *La Civilisation et l'organisation, leur influence sur la guerre*.¹ After passing in review the opinions of philosophers, almost all of whom condemn war, he defends the paradoxical thesis that neither with animals nor prehistoric men is there real struggle; war arises with the appearance of hereditary chiefs and ruling families. It is power which creates the appetite for more power and the unwholesome desire for domination and unlimited conquest. On this interpretation organization is the source of militarism, while its inverse, civilization, consists on the contrary in "a development of private and public morality to the point where each member of the social body respects spontaneously—quite without coercion—the life, goods, and liberty of all the others." There is much truth in this antithesis. But how can we admit that struggle is an accident in nature? Undoubtedly *organized* warfare is a function of the progress of mankind in technical knowledge. But does that mean that science and industry have engendered war? They do nothing but give it its external form. The effort toward universal expansion is the most general characteristic of living beings and the 'union for existence' made famous by Kropotkin, is merely a successful incident in the struggle for existence.² Despotic governments, aristocratic castes, established creeds favor war; that is certain. But whence come the castes themselves? Do they not frequently, if not always, arise from struggle and conquest?

M. de Lanessan indignantly attacks his eminent colleague, M. Gaston Bonnier, for speaking of war among the bees and for saying that "nature is savage." It seems to him that such an opinion would logically issue in "excusing the crime of the German Empire in provoking the present terrible war." How would this be an excuse? M. de Lanessan seems to think that all that is natural is good, and he is not alone in so thinking. But nothing

¹ Large 8vo, published by Alcan, 62 pages.

² In his lecture *La guerre au point de vue biologique*, M. Et. Rabaud has considered this question much more fully, and in a judicial manner stated the arguments for and against. (*Conférences de l'Association française pour l'avancement des sciences*, 1918, published by Masson and Co., pp. 80 to 95.)

is less evident; and to admit it is to remain in the philosophy of the eighteenth century. While agreeing with M. Gaston Bonnier that "nature is savage," we can also agree with M. de Lanessan that the ethical rôle of man is to go in the opposite direction from this ferocity and from the kind of organization which promotes it. Here, as elsewhere, conscience and right are not of less value because they are the antithesis of life, as of differentiation. Is not organization the most characteristic feature of life, even of merely biological life? We have here then neither an excuse nor an extenuation of the wrong done—except for those who interpolate a false minor premise between the major premise and the conclusion.

Right here may be mentioned one who comes very close to M. Gaston Bonnier, and who ends by denouncing organized and scientific barbarity as forcefully as could be desired.

In form *Hélène enchaînée*¹ is a poem in dialogue. It contains enough beautiful verse to give it a place in any literary review. But fundamentally it is a philosophical work by the same token as the book which inspired it,—the Second Faust. It is, so to speak, an epilogue or, more exactly, a fantastic fragment to be put with the *Paralipomena*. The last incarnation of Goethe's hero at the end of the 'Second Faust' is the man of magnificent ambition who is devoured with the passion of *pleonexia*. Seconded by Mephistopheles he sways and stimulates the working-people, through whom he hopes to build a new world, but who, in reality, dig his grave. He is not simply an organizer, he is a conqueror. Urged on by his infernal acolyte who preaches to him unlimited expansion, universal "colonization," he seeks to extend his dominion over all the neighboring territories. He decides to drive out Philemon and Baucis, whose little possession has the misfortune to adjoin his. He orders them banished, whether they are willing or not, to a beautiful distant estate. But the gentle and pious old couple cling to their corner of the earth, and shut themselves up in the inmost recesses of their cottage. Without a moment's hesitation the soldiers break in the door, murder

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, *Librairie Plon*. Madame M. Combes is the daughter of M. Gaston Bonnier. I may add that he entirely approves the philosophy of war which stands out in *Hélène Enchaînée*.

the old man and woman, set fire to the cottage, the overshadowing lindens, and the neighboring chapel. And Faust, looking at the fire from a distance, consoles himself, after a first moment of regret, by thinking that from his palace "the view will in the future extend to infinity."

Does not this read like the history of Belgium? It is this same Faust, drunk with pride, deluded by the desire for power, who reappears in *Hélène enchaînée*. Hélène represents civilization and beauty as conceived by the Greek genius and those who inherited that tradition. It is

l'éclat humain et doux de la chaste Raison.

Faust hopes to seduce her by the display of his intellectual, social, and military power. He boasts to her of his gigantic ambition, the varied resources he has accumulated in order to become universal master and which he pretends that he will use to build up under his dominion a more perfect world. Hélène, who gradually comes to understand him better, wishes to leave this palace which seems to her nothing but a brigands' retreat. Too late! War is declared. Faust informs her that she is held as a prisoner. Then with his gift of magic and magnetism he confers on her the gift of vision through time and space. But the clairvoyant captive perceives, not what he hoped—the apotheosis of his victorious force—but the tragedy which is about to plunge him and his people by an inevitable dialectic into the abyss. The law of his destruction is personified by the Greek Moira (a trifle modernized), the divine Nemesis who will not permit human pretensions to scorn moral laws:

L'équilibre du monde est une conscience,

Faust!

In vain one seeks to make a compact with evil for the profit of good, to proceed by violence toward happiness and universal peace, to realize the reign of justice by a gigantic hegemony. These unsound methods are condemned to sure defeat. Durkheim wrote truly in 1915 in the prophetic conclusion of his pamphlet: *L'Allemagne au-dessus de tout*: "There is a universal conscience and a world-wide opinion from the dominion of which one can no more withdraw than from the dominion of physical

laws. For they are forces, which if struck, strike back at those who offend. There are, indeed, severe nervous disorders in the course of which the sick person's powers are excessively stimulated; his capacity for work and production is increased; he does things of which he would be incapable under normal conditions. He has no sense of his limitations. But this extreme excitement is never more than a passing thing. It exhausts by its exaggeration, and nature is not slow to take revenge. . . . When the will refuses to recognize the limits and measure set for every man, inevitably it will allow itself to be carried to exhausting excesses, and some day it will strike against superior forces which will shatter it."

Is it not curious thus to see positive sociology joining with the mystic tradition which is as old as history?

IV.

Studies in the history of philosophy have suffered less from the war than philosophy proper. Why, it is difficult to say. Perhaps because they divert us more from the pressure of anxiety. To philosophize is to think with the total content of the mind; thus at the present time it means, almost inevitably, to recur to the griefs, difficulties and agonies of the present hour. He who fixes his mind on a classical work, on the contrary, gradually lets himself be drawn out of the sad circle of the present. He recovers something of the serenity of the time before the war. He anticipates the future when, if it is given us to see order and normal conditions reestablished, we shall be able to tie again the thread of tradition.

I should have spoken first of numerous articles by G. Milhaud on scientific problems in the philosophy of Descartes,—chapters from a book he was finishing on *Descartes savant*. But unfortunately death suddenly overtook him just as he was finishing his work. I will recur later to the career and work of this excellent man.

Durkheim, who is gone too,¹ had written during his last years a very profound study of J. J. Rousseau, which has just appeared

¹ See the *PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW* for 1918, pp. 465 to 468.

in the *Revue de métaphysique*. His main concern is to show the unity of the work of the author of *Émile* and the *Contrat Social* through all the diversity of subject-matter.

M. Léon Robin, who is, I suppose, at the present time our best historian of ancient philosophy, has brought out a substantial study on *La signification et la place de la physique dans la philosophie de Platon*.¹ He compares Plato's spirit to that of Malebranche, who is the most capable, he says, of all the philosophers familiar to us, of making us understand Platonism. Malebranche received the deepest impression from the thought of St. Augustine, and from the Greek tradition with which Augustine was saturated.—It is a common—almost a consecrated—practice in our French examinations for the licentiate, to train our students to search out in this way likenesses and differences in ancient and modern philosophical doctrines that bear on the same subject. We only understand well that which we can translate into another language. And are not comparisons of this sort a vigorous stimulus to 'rethink' what is enduring or permanent in these doctrines?

M. Delacroix has published an interesting and scholarly work on the *Psychologie de Stendhal*.² Wretchedly misunderstood during his lifetime, Stendhal had a generation of admirers about 1848 in the group of graduates of the École Normale among whom Taine, About, Sarcey, Eugène Yung, Prévost-Paradol were the best known representatives. Later he was a little neglected, but recovered favor about 1890 when several of his published works were issued. He does not please everyone, and some of our best known critics have written very sharp things about him. But those who have once tasted him see his defects, indeed, but yet always keep an attachment—one might almost say, a weakness—for him. His mind is so original (in spite of his plagiarisms), and at bottom so sincere and so true, even when he hides behind the most deceiving masques. He is a singular writer, the only one of his kind, with a quite special quality, sometimes too con-

¹ *Revue philosophique*, October-December, 1918; 1 vol., 8vo, *Collection historique des grands philosophes*, published by Alcan.

² 1 vol., 8vo, published by Alcan.

densed or too subtle, often irritating with his *egotism* or fancies; but he never uses words for their own sake, and thought and feeling are always with him real, actual, living. How few deserve that commendation! The *Psychologie de Stendhal* is neither a defence nor an accusation. M. Delacroix has tried to make him intelligible by connecting him with his sources. The first part of the book examines Stendhal's connections with the school of the ideologists (Hévétius, Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy). The second is devoted to his theory of love. The last deals with Stendhal's ideas and impressions of art, and is the best part of the book. The author, who is himself a discriminating lover of art, particularly of music, has sympathetically understood and expounded Stendhal's ideas on this subject and his psychology of æsthetic feelings.

In a very fresh little book called *Chez les prophètes socialistes*,¹ M. Bouglé has given us fragments of a study, with which he has been engaged for a long time, on the history of economic and social doctrines. The men of whom he speaks date from the last century; but the questions he discusses in connection with them are most timely,—the relations of the working-class and the 'intellectuals' in the school of Saint Simon; Saint Simonian feminism; the attempt by Karl Marx and Arnold Ruge to form a French-German scientific alliance in 1844; and finally the relations of Marxism and sociology. It contains one very keen and intelligent criticism of historical materialism: through failure to apply its own principles and to regard social phenomena objectively, that is, as positive facts, Karl Marx has substituted for the realistic study of moral and religious facts an *a priori* interpretation which juggles with them instead of explaining them, and deliberately transforms them into an illusion.

M. Moustoxidi, a Greek, has obtained his doctorate from the University of Paris by a curious thesis on *Les systèmes esthétiques en France*,² examined exclusively with reference to their "scientific" character. He means by that qualification all studies on art which have only a theoretical aim, which are

¹ 1 vol., 12mo, published by Alcan.

² 1 vol., 8vo, published by Jouve & Cie.

neither critical, nor polemical, nor the manifesto of a school, which have no object but to state the facts of esthetics and find formulas by which to classify and explain them. Thus he regards the preface of Victor Hugo's *Cromwell* as typical of "doctrinal esthetics," and drops it; on the other hand, Jouffroy's *Cours d'Esthétique* is the pattern of "esthetic system" which he wishes to study. The difficulty in such a classification is at once apparent. How many works there are between these two extremes! And between 1700 where the book begins and 1900 where it closes what an enormous distance to traverse! In default of a thorough study, M. Moustoxidi's book is at least an interesting disquisition on the progress of scientific esthetics in France; it gives many names and quotations, and may suggest some special studies which will gradually complete it. The author himself expects to work energetically toward this end.

Without leaving the province of philosophy Madame Metzger's book, *La genèse de la science des cristaux*,¹ may be given mention. Although belonging particularly to the history of the physical sciences, it is full of references and reflections useful for students of the functions of human thought. In spite of certain defects of form, which are quite external, it is an instructive and solid piece of work, and contains new and well-chosen matter. By showing the threefold origin of crystallography in the study of minerals, living beings, and physical phenomena (the book is divided into parts on the basis of these distinctions), the author furnishes a remarkable illustration of the polygenetic character of most sciences. This character has usually passed unnoticed on account of the prejudices connected with evolution. By showing the alternate play of patient examination of sources, investigation of the given, and on the other hand, of invention and intelligent interpretation of facts, she supplies some typical and unpublished examples of a well-known law, but a law which had not given precise statement to the relative value of the different parts of an investigation. Finally, Madame Metzger's book makes a precious contribution to the fundamental problem of epistemology, that of the needs and claims of

¹ 1 vol., small 8vo, published by Alcan.

logical thought,—by asking what constitutes the decisive turn, the triumphal moment when one may say: “At this point science enters.” I do not mean that her answers to these questions are complete; certainly the author’s views might be discussed or made more precise at certain points. But this improvement would often be accomplished by reliance on this very book,—its value is then untouched.

V

This year also there have been two great losses among the striking figures in French philosophy: Jules Lachelier and Gaston Milhaud.

Born in 1832, admitted at the École Normale in 1851, Jules Lachelier was the oldest of our masters. He attained great eminence from a little book of rare conciseness and originality on *Le Fondement de l'induction* (its main idea goes back to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*), a Latin thesis on the syllogism, an article on “*Psychologie et Métaphysique*,” and a few essays gathered into a slender volume under the title of *Études sur le syllogisme*.¹ Purity of language, propriety of expression, and formal clearness are as conspicuous in his work as the force of his thought. His teaching exercised so profound an influence at the Ecole Normale, where he was professor for some years, that long after his departure the new students recopied his lectures, and transmitted them from class to class. His knowledge of all classical philosophy—still more, of classical literature—was marvellously wide and sure. Yet, strangely enough, this wonderful teacher did not like to teach. Even to say this is not enough; in reality teaching was for him suffering and perplexity. He was never satisfied either with what he was going to say, or with what he had said. No one ever felt more strongly than he the infinite complexity of problems, the impossibility of keeping to ‘positive facts,’ to detailed observation, and meanwhile the almost insurmountable difficulty of arriving at a stable system without deliberately closing the eyes to lacunæ and inconsistencies—a thing

¹ As a matter of fact the title applies to only two of the articles. Besides these the volume contains a critical discussion of *l’Observation de Platner*, regarding a man blind from his birth, and a note on the *Philebus*.

which his scrupulous passion for truth would never tolerate. Later the same feeling made him forbid the publication of any sketches or notes after his death.

Although he had done great service by teaching, it was a relief to his conscience to leave it and enter upon administrative work. In his position as Inspector of the Academy at Paris, subsequently as Inspector-general of Public Instruction for classes in philosophy, then for a long time as President of the Jury on Fellowships,¹ he could continue to exert a considerable though indirect influence. "As regards M. Lachelier," wrote the Editor of the *Revue de Métaphysique* at the time of his death, "all Frenchmen who have lived the philosophical life in the last half century owe him a debt of gratitude and respectful remembrance."

He leaned in his views toward a critical idealism which interprets the soul not as substance—an invisible being in a visible body—but as the condition of knowledge and action. It was for him a reality quite different from the objects of representation. It transcends nature and causal determination, and is therefore free,—not free through breaking the chain of facts by the introduction of indeterminate phenomena, but free in belonging to another kingdom from that of facts and laws. Teleology is superimposed upon mechanism without infringing on the rights of mechanism and without withdrawing anything in nature from the conditions of understanding and logic. Similarly, upon philosophical thought a still higher stage is superimposed,—that of religious faith. Faith is added to, without demanding any sacrifice from reason. Faith and reason cannot conflict, except in appearance, because their problems are different. Thus at the same time Lachelier might be seen professing the Catholic faith most confidently and yet, when he spoke or wrote as a philosopher, not recoiling before the most daring speculation. "His brain had water-tight compartments," said Bersot. His mind was thoroughly saturated with the notion of hierarchy and eclecticism, not in the sense of Cousin, whom he disliked, but in the sense of Leibniz.

¹ The 'fellowship' is the highest professional examination in philosophy in France. See *The Philosophical Review*, July, 1907, pp. 365-368.

But he never expressed his great ideas except in the most cautious form. He attended regularly the sessions of the *Société de philosophie*, but scarcely ever spoke except when appealed to. He then gave his opinion on the subject under discussion discretely, and with so much penetration, justice, and nicety that no one could have been heard with more respect or profit. He had a gift which at first seems paradoxical of defining and enlarging questions at the same time. He brought to the task of revising the *Vocabulaire philosophique* the marked characteristics of clearness, depth, learning, and reliability. Freed from the care of arranging a lesson or an article, free to write only a few words or to fill several pages according to the inspiration of the moment, he loved this task which furnished food for reflection without curtailing liberty. He wished to see the completion of it; and he would have had his desire, if the war had not hindered this modest enterprise as it did so many other things. Of what may one speak in France at the present time that war has not injured, if not, indeed, ruined?

Born in 1858, Gaston Milhaud was a much younger man than Lachelier, and not so revered a figure in French philosophy. But he captivated all who met him by the charm of his personality, the keenness of his mind, and the delicacy of his feelings. He was at first a student of mathematics. He entered the scientific department of the *École Normale* in 1878, graduated in 1881 and was professor of mathematics for more than fifteen years. Reflection upon the subject he taught and on neighboring sciences such as mathematical physics,—and, from another direction, conversations with M. Pierre Janet, his colleague for a number of years at the *Lycée* at Havre—led him to philosophy. By 1893 he had published his *Leçons sur les origines de la science grecque*, a résumé of a free course given at the University of Montpellier. His *Essai sur les conditions et les limites de la certitude logique*, *Le Rationnel*, *Études sur la pensée scientifique chez les Grecs et les modernes* (to mention only his best known works) brought him so rapidly into honorable notice that in 1909 there was created for him in the Sorbonne a chair of “History of Philosophy in its relation to the Sciences.” He continued in-

struction in this subject to the great profit of his students until his death. When he died he was on the point of publishing a book on *Descartes savant*. With solid learning in two subjects, mathematics and philosophy, he was one of the few men capable of treating such a delicate historical problem. Various chapters of the work which have already appeared in the scientific or philosophical journals show plainly enough how valuable and original it is.

William James classed him among the Pragmatists, or at least among the thinkers favorable to Pragmatism,—Mach, Pearson, Poincaré, Duhem, etc. He did not accept this label willingly. To be sure, the fundamental character of his thought was the negation of classical idealism, the conviction that there is no such thing as pure theoretical knowledge in the sense of Descartes or Kant. He contributed vigorously to the contemporary movement in criticism of the sciences which has humbled the pretensions of mathematics to absolute truth. He was one of the first to hold that only the formulæ referring to arbitrary conventions are absolute. He drew the inference that reflective voluntary decisions rank high in the development of thought as in action. He asserted the rights of freedom everywhere, and feared anything which stiffened the life of the spirit. But his reaction against 'pure logic' and the partisans of the *a priori* did not exclude a profound faith in reason, both in the theoretical and practical fields. If not a rationalist in the sense of the great defenders of 'universal intelligibility,' he was passionately rationalistic in a sense opposed to philosophical romanticism, the apology for sentiment, implicit faith, all the doctrines of knowledge through the heart, characteristic examples of which I gave above. He refused to assign to reason what he considered a fabricated genealogy, but he insisted strongly on the right of reason to rule conduct and individual beliefs. He knew that truth is difficult to attain—more difficult still to define—but he did not doubt that all matters which concern us are accessible to our intelligence and he would never admit that anything could be preferred to rational truth. Like Poincaré he began with the most radical formulas in order to shake his con-

temporaries out of their mental sluggishness or dogmatic routine; like him again, he ended by defending the value of science against the many who at the present time stop at the first look, and fancy that they can make a theory out of purely negative doctrines such as indeterminism and anti-intellectualism. Possibly there is a lesson in this double evolution.

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